

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 10-0213R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: Councilmembers Spector, Branch, Holton, Clarke, Cole, Stokes, Conaway,  
Reisinger, Middleton, Kraft, Welch, President Young, Councilmembers Henry, D'Adamo,  
Curran

Introduced and read first time: June 14, 2010

Assigned to: Public Safety and Health Committee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Police Commissioner, Department of Recreation and  
Parks, Department of Transportation, Health Department

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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Investigative Hearing – Dirt Bikes on City Streets**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting the Police Commissioner, the Director of Recreation and Parks,  
4 and the Director of Transportation to present to the City Council a comprehensive report on  
5 the impact of illegal dirt bikes on the welfare, safety, and enjoyment of Baltimore City's  
6 residential neighborhoods, parks, and transportation system; asking the Interim Health  
7 Commissioner to report on the impact to the health care system in terms of uncompensated  
8 care for injuries arising from incidents involving dirt bikes; and urging all parties to work  
9 with the Council to develop a comprehensive plan to address the persistent problem of illegal  
10 dirt bikes in Baltimore City.

11 **Recitals**

12 Since the beginning of this month, there have been 2 serious incidents involving dirt bikes on  
13 the streets of Baltimore – in the first, a Greenbelt man, riding a legal motorcycle, swerved to  
14 avoid hitting an illegal dirt bike rider with a toddler passenger, hit a light pole, and died from his  
15 injuries. Two days later the driver of a car was hospitalized after his vehicle was broadsided by  
16 a dirt bike, and the rider returned with his cohorts and beat the man so severely that he had to be  
17 taken to Maryland Shock Trauma Center.

18 These were only the latest of many troubling incidents involving dirt bikes. Beginning in  
19 1990, there have been reports of dirt bikes using the sidewalks of Greater Mondawmin as  
20 raceways; dirt bikes racing 6 abreast on a half-mile runway with no traffic signals from North  
21 Avenue to Gwynns Falls; a group of 70 dirt bikes racing through Druid Hill Park; a rider of a dirt  
22 bike hitting a 6-year old girl and dragging her 46 feet, while darting through the narrow public  
23 housing pathways of Lafayette Courts to deal drugs; and a dirt bike rider in Brooklyn being  
24 pronounced dead at the scene of an accident caused by riding on a too-small dirt bike. District  
25 Police Commanders reported problems with dirt bikes from Walbrook to Rosemont, to  
26 Reisterstown Road and the Gwynns Falls Parkway, from parks and railroad tracks in South  
27 Baltimore to Clifton Park in Northeast Baltimore, and on Monument Street on the city's east  
28 side.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.  
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

## Council Bill 10-0213R

1 Although statistics were not available in 1999, the Baltimore Police Traffic Enforcement  
2 Section investigated 7 fatalities in 2 years. Dirt bike riders were often involved in accidents  
3 because of little or no experience and were often killed or sustained serious injuries because the  
4 bikes ran into larger vehicles on public roads. Departmental records included incidents of dirt  
5 bikes running into the back of 10,000 pound delivery trucks, the sides of large vans, and  
6 underneath buses and semis. When the riders did not impact with the larger vehicle, they were  
7 thrown from the dirt bike and impacted violently with the highway, sidewalk, building or other  
8 solid, immovable object.

9 Over the years Baltimore City has passed legislation seeking to control dirt bikes. In  
10 addition to an outright prohibition against operation on public or private land in the City, these  
11 laws allow police to seize unregistered bikes from the homes where they are stored; allow the  
12 seizure of unlocked dirt bikes from alleys, driveways, front yards, and streets; prohibit the sale  
13 and dispensing of gasoline into dirt bikes; and prohibit the storage of gasoline in homes to  
14 discourage the collection of fuel in canisters for subsequent use in dirt bikes. Despite the  
15 prohibition against the operation of dirt bikes within city limits, Baltimore police will not pursue  
16 riders because “vehicle pursuits by members of the Department are strictly prohibited unless  
17 there are exigent circumstances.”

18 At a recent community forum hosted by the City Council President at BCCC’s Liberty  
19 Campus, dirt bike enthusiasts decried their treatment as “illegals”, claimed to use the vehicles as  
20 crime fighting tools, and demanded the respect to organize. They held that, although dirt bikes  
21 are illegal, it is better for them to be out running the streets on bikes, than for them to be standing  
22 on street corners getting into trouble. A B-More Bike Culture ESPN posting seems to support  
23 the persistence of illegal dirt bike riding in Baltimore: “Right now, a major movement is going  
24 down in the streets of Baltimore, Maryland...Inner city residents have developed a huge love for  
25 dirt bikes, but instead of hucking them off ramps or racing them at the track, these cats are doing  
26 what every dirt biker wishes they could do – they’re straight getting down in parks, in the streets,  
27 and all over the city for that matter.”

28 Dirt bikes are fast claiming a popular outlaw image with sympathizers throughout the City  
29 and attracting like-minded riders from outside the borders of the City and state. City agencies  
30 and communities must get ahead of the movement and stop the terrorization of our citizens and  
31 visitors, alleviate the danger to pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and prevent the misuse and abuse  
32 of our parks and recreation areas.

33 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
34 Police Commissioner, the Director of Recreation and Parks, and the Director of Transportation  
35 are requested to present to the City Council a comprehensive report on the impact of illegal dirt  
36 bikes on the welfare, safety, and enjoyment of Baltimore City’s residential neighborhoods, parks,  
37 and transportation system; the Interim Health Commissioner is asked to report on the impact to  
38 the health care system in terms of uncompensated care for injuries arising from incidents  
39 involving dirt bikes; and all parties are urged to work with the Council to develop a  
40 comprehensive plan to address the persistent problem of illegal dirt bikes in Baltimore City.

41 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
42 Police Commissioner, the Director of Recreation and Parks, the Director of Transportation, the  
43 Interim Health Commissioner, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.